A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, August 18. 1709.

AND now they say, the lame Post is come in—— And still all Advices confirm the Disaster of the *Swedes*. And really it is a strange Thing, and what the World hardly ever heard of before; That an Army of *Swedes* should be overthrown in plain Battle by an Army of *Muscovites*——That is, in the Language of the Age, at least it would have been in the last Age, an Army of *Veterans* beaten by a *Mob*, a *Crowd*, a meer *Militia*; an Army of the bravest Fellows in the World beaten by Scoundrels, old Alms-Women, or any Thing what you please to call them—— A Nation of whom History relates, that when one of the Czars sent a haughty Message, threatning to declare War against the *Turks*— The *Turkish* Emperor bad the Messenger or Ambassador go home, and tell his Master, *he understood neither how to make War or Peace.*

The *Swedes* are some of the bravest Men in the World; no Prince can lead, or indeed desire to lead better Troops—— They are strong of Body, hardy in Constitution, patient in Duty, bold in Action, daring and resolute to Extremity—severe in Discipline, and in short, have all in them, that Human Nature can furnish towards making an Army invincible— Flush'd with Victory, they have always contemn'd the *Muscovite* to that Degree, that they have not bank'd attacking them, even with the monstrous Odds of Five to One—and under the

the Diſadvantages of Intrenchments, Lines, and Cannon—And yet the Scale has at laſt turn'd upon them—— All which, I cannot help ſaying, ſeems to me, *others may think what they pleaſe*, but I ſay *ſeems to me*, to be the Effect, not of any Failure of the Men, *I mean the Swedes*, but of the unaccountable Preſumption and Obſtinacy of their Leader; who, ſwell'd with the Vanity of former Victories——deſpis'd too much the fam'd Regulations and Improvements in Military Service, which the *Muſcovites* had made theſe laſt two Years; 'tis known to all *Europe*, that by the Conduct of *German*, *Scots*, *French*, and other Foreign Generals and Officers, the whole Military Oeconomy of the *Muſcovites* has been alter'd, their Men regimented, cloth'd, pay'd, and exercis'd after the *German* Manner, and having exact Diſcipline ſettled among them, become obedient, enur'd to Service, and daring enough; and being naturally fierce and furious, are in a fair Way to be made as good Soldiers as any in the World—— This is what I have often call'd Teaching the *Muſcovite*, by beating him, *to beat us all*; and it begins to prove ſo, for now the Vanquiſh'd turn Victors. Thus it was with the *Romans*, who, by invading the *Northern* Nations, taught them to over-run them at laſt—— The *Goths* and *Vandals* were ſtrong Bodies, hardy, fierce, and deſperate, but ignorant of Diſcipline, barbarous, and untractable — But as ſoon as ever they learnt the Uſe of the *Roman* Weapons, learnt to ſubmit to Diſcipline, to obſerve Rules and Methods in Fighting, they beat the *Romans* out of the World, robb'd them of all their Laurels, and ſhar'd that vaſt Empire among the *Barbarians*—— Should the *Muſcovites* by being beaten, learn what we call *the Art of War*; ſhould they become Maſters of Diſcipline, their Armies become regular, and their Nobility apply themſelves to the War; ſhould they prevail upon *Europe* under theſe Improvements, Poſterity would be as little oblig'd to the King of *S....n* hereafter, as we are now to the late King *Charles*, whoſe ſelling *Dunkirk*, and letting the *French* into all the Methods of the Royal Navy of *England*, was the Foundation, upon which the King of *France* is now grown ſuperiour to moſt of the Naval Powers of Chriſtendom.

But ſhall we now conſider the preſent Circumſtances of the King of *S....n*, ſuppoſing him to be eſcap'd from this terrible Blow, which, they ſay, he has receiv'd from this contemptible Enemy the *Muſcovite*? —— It is certain, he falls the moſt unpity'd of all the Princes of the World, that ever had the Misfortune to be ruin'd; they talk of him as a Prince that purſu'd a War in the Judgment of the World, againſt *not his own Intereſt only*, but againſt the common Good of Chriſtendom—— *A War*, that could hardly end in his Advantage *any poſſible way*; *a War* againſt a Prince, that could no other way make him Satisfaction, but in being deſtroy'd, and yet that in being deſtroy'd or dethron'd, could bring him neither Profit or Honour; whoſe Dominions, if he poſſeſs'd 'em, would ruin him *to keep*, *too poor* to be plunder'd, *too barren* to be improv'd, *too remote* to come at; vaſt in *Extent*, wild in the *Surface*, thin of Inhabitants, empty of every Thing, but that very Emptineſs which would of it ſelf ſubdue its Conquerors.

While this fierce young Conqueror purſu'd his Enemy thro' the Waſtes and Wilds of *Ruſſia* and *Lithuania*, while he waſtes a gallant Army in thoſe Deſarts; the *Muſcovite*, who grew every Day a Proficient in the Subtilties of *Europe*, and vigilant to lay hold of the Advantages of the War, ravag'd the wealthy Provinces upon the *Baltick*, made himſelf Maſter of *Narva*, and great Part of *Livonia*, encrich'd himſelf with the Spoils of the *Swediſh* Countries, and fix'd himſelf on the Shoars of the *Baltick*, from whence he may in time bid fair for the Maſterſhip of thoſe Seas—— He allures the *Swede* to the Banks of the *Boriſtenes*, and ſhunning a ſet Battle, waſtes his Forces by Skirmiſhes and Surprizes—— *What tho' he loſt ten Men for one*? He that has a Country of Slaves behind him, of near 2000 Mile Square, all the Inhabitants as ſubject to him, as a Gentleman's Hounds in *England* are to his Huntſmen; what ſignifies the Loſs to him? whereas every *Swediſh* Soldier is as much a Loſs to the other, as a Company would be to the *Muſcovite*.

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Having thus, I say, drawn him on, in Pursuit of *that imaginary Thing* call'd Glory, or *as some will have it*, Revenge, see what he is come to; first his General *Lewinhaupt* is routed, with a Convoy of Provisions and Ammunition coming to him, and at last he is fallen himself into an irretrievable Gulph, broken and entirely overthrown by an Enemy, he had the Boldness to attack in his Entrenchments. Unhappy Ambition! That when it once flatters Men with the Glory of Conquest, blinds them with Mists and Shadows of imaginary Glory, in Pursuit of which they precipitate themselves into the deepest Gulphs of Human Misery.

It was a famous Maxim of *Julius Cæsar*, never to despise an Enemy; Nothing but the meer Contempt of his Enemy could ever have push'd the *Swede* to this Madness. Nothing but some imaginary Schemes of Grandeur, beyond what can be reasonable, could push him upon sacrifizing such brave Troops, on such miserable wretched Conquests—What could it be to the King of *Sweden* to reign over abandon'd Deserts, and to govern barbarous Nations, poor and voracious, that had nothing to lose, and the World about them nothing to gain—What greater would he be for Hoards of *Tartars*, or Swarms of *Cossacks*, Subjects no Prince would seek to govern, nor any Laws but the Sword oblige to obey?

The King of *Sweden* is already Monarch of a noble, generous, and gallant Nation—A faithful, brave People, a numerous and polite Gentry, and an illustrious Nobility; Subjects that merit a better Fortune, than to be sacrifiz'd to the Rage and Ambition of a single Person, to prosecute Revenge, and to make fruitless Conquests over Countries impossible to be kept, and no way worth gaining.

The Wisdom of Providence is conspicuous in nothing more *relating to such Cases*, than in chequing the Pride and Vanity of ambitious Tyrannical Princes, Men of the Sword, whose Pride runs upon subjecting their Fellow-Creatures to Violence and Destruction; and, *if our Accounts from* Muscovy *are true*, the King of *S...n* may stand for a *Memento Mori* to all the furious ambitious Princes of *Europe*—And it will be their Wisdom to take Warning from it.

MISCELLANEA.

I Have enter'd upon, and must pursue the great Subject of improving *Scotland*, which, I say, lies so much at our Door—That it may be done, I have affirm'd; there remain two Things to speak to, in order to clear up the main Point.

1. Who must make these Improvements?
2. How must they be made?

As to the who, indeed Gentlemen of *Scotland*, I shall be very plain with you—I know, who ought to do it—I know, who told us loudly enough, they would do it; and I know, who having flush Stocks in their Hands, could really do it to their own, as well as to your Advantages, but I dare not say, *they will* do it—I dare not answer, that their Eyes are so open to their own Interest, or their Concern great enough for yours—And therefore I do not say in my Enquiry, who SHOULD make these Improvements, but *who MUST make them*; who MUST do it if ever it be done; who MUST, or no Body will.

And this Question I readily answer thus; you MUST do it your selves; it does not indeed follow, that you shall receive no Help, no Assistance, no Forwardings from us in *England*——Perhaps the Time may come, that mov'd by our own Interests, if not by our Honesty, we may lend you a Hand—But in the mean time you must do it, that is, you must set about it your selves.

The Complaint which you make, that we do not do our Part for you, tho' it be a good Argument against us, yet take this along with you too, it is no Argument, why you should do nothing your selves——

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